
Overview

This standard is about the effective response of a practitioner not expert in allergy, typically in primary care, to an individual with symptoms that might indicate allergy. It particularly involves 'thinking allergy' – knowing when to look for and how to recognise symptoms that indicate the potential for more severe reaction with future exposures and the need for referral to specialist allergy services. In less critical cases it requires the practitioner to recognise the limits of their competence. Within their competence they treat an individual's symptoms or refer the individual for more expert investigation and opinion.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Recognise when to consider allergy in an individual

Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 identify features that indicate possible allergy and the potential for more severe reaction with future exposures from the individual's description of their concerns, the presenting problem, and their observations
- P2 find out the nature, frequency, onset, pattern and severity of the individual's symptoms
- P3 find out from the individual, their records and the family history other problems associated with an allergic condition
- P4 identify whether lifestyle, emotions, occupation and/or stress may play a part in the individual's symptoms
- P5 identify what the individual may have done to alleviate the symptoms and the effectiveness of those measures
- P6 decide whether the individual's symptoms are likely to have a non-allergic cause that needs intervention before re-evaluation
- P7 refer the individual for specialist diagnosis if:
 - P7.1 presenting symptoms are severe, poorly controlled or any features indicate the potential for more severe reaction with future exposures
 - P7.2 the presenting problem impacts significantly on the individual's wellbeing and you are not able to resolve it
- P8 if the individual's symptoms are not severe and do not indicate a potential for more severe health implications, prescribe or recommend medication for symptom management in line with current best practice
- P9 in the case of children apply a lower threshold for referral
- P10 in the case of potentially serious or life-threatening reactions, advise the individual to avoid the suspected allergen and maintain control of related symptoms in line with current best practice
- P11 explain the importance of proper diagnosis and the risks of self-diagnosis and treatment of allergy by non-validated practitioners

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 when to suspect allergy
- K2 common allergic conditions, their causes and their presentation
- K3 acute severe allergic conditions, their development and risks
- K4 conditions that can coexist in allergy and the way in which they affect or are affected by allergy
- K5 how to distinguish allergy symptoms from other conditions presenting with similar conditions
- K6 pharmacological management of allergic disease
- K7 local availability of allergy services
- K8 care pathway options for the management of allergy
- K9 information on organisations for patients
- K10 reliable evidence-based and unbiased information and educational resources about allergy

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Additional Information

External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and treatment planning

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